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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PRETORIA 000225

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH SOUTH AFRICA'S PERFORMANCE
MONITORING MINISTER CHABANE

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Classified By: Political Counselor Walter N.S. Pflaumer for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Minister in the Presidency for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Collins Chabane hosted Ambassador Gips on January 26 at the Union Buildings. Chabane, who sets goals and tracks progress for the entire government, has overcome initial resistance from some government officials and is beginning to establish preliminary structures for monitoring ministries across all spheres of government. With a small staff, the Minister is working to publicize the government's goals and seeking to make the public aware that the administration is trying to address South Africa's needs. Chabane admitted his job is not easy and said "it may be two to three years before we see any results." Ambassador Gips relayed to Chabane that the USG is ready to help the Minister address areas of mutual concern such as education, health, corruption, police training, and youth programs. Chabane promised to consult others in the administration and follow-up with more specific ways the U.S. could help in the future. End Summary.

Chabane's Daunting Task

¶2. (U) Ambassador Gips, Deputy Chief of Mission La Lime, and Poloff (notetaker) met with Chabane on January 26 in his office. As the Minister introduced himself and his aide, he related that "nothing is well here" because "we are struggling to make things work." The Minister agreed with the Ambassador that he has one of the toughest jobs in the South African Government. Chabane discussed generally how he views his job and what he is hoping to achieve in the ministry. He noted he is responsible for creating goals for every ministry at all levels of government and emphasized, "We create goals for the ministries, not the other way around." He said his office, which is fewer than 10 staffers, is trying to change how the entire administration functions by setting performance goals for the various ministries. He noted the government must be restructured so it can deliver and added "we must cut through red tape."

¶3. (U) Chabane hopes all preliminary structures for monitoring ministries in the national, provincial, and municipal governments will be in place within 12 months. He

said, "It may be two to three years before we see any results." However, he admitted that even this time frame may be unrealistic and said "sometimes a problem is too big to point to only one challenge." One challenge he did point to is the difficulty of convincing government leaders that monitoring the administration's performance is a good idea. He noted it had been a struggle to "get everyone onboard" even though "we are working well now." The national level of government has bought into the new style of government, but the provincial and municipal governments have yet to do so because they lack capacity and are "simply too busy."

14. (U) What the Minister views as most important is the need for visible government outcomes so the public knows the administration is trying to better South Africans' lives. He said that President Jacob Zuma will outline the government's goals in his State of the Nation address next month so citizens could assess the impact of services and look at government achievements. He added, "In this way, the public can judge us." He conceded that making goals public will give the opposition political ammunition to use against the African National Congress (ANC) should Zuma's administration fail to meet its targets. However, Chabane said he believes it will be best if everyone knows the goals because it will help reduce the public's frustration. Ambassador Gips agreed with Chabane, who said that such transparency is good for a country with a multiparty democracy.

Areas of Potential Cooperation

15. (C) Chabane is open to the idea of increased assistance from the United States. He said he has met with his

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counterparts from the United Kingdom and France, and he responded favorably to the idea of meeting with USG officials with the same portfolio. Chabane said he was unsure whether he could travel to the United States because he was refused a visa the last time he applied because of his activities in the ANC during the party's liberation struggle. He said, "In the end, I just gave up because it was such a hassle." Ambassador Gips promised the USG would work to make the process easier for him the next time he sought to visit the U.S. (Note: We are following up on this. End Note.) Chabane said South Africa is most interested in working with the U.S. on education, health, corruption, police training, and youth issues.

16. (U) On education, the Minister said the government is turning its focus to early childhood programs so better results could be reached sooner. He noted the government needs to do "the simple things better" by ensuring teachers and students are in class (which frequently does not happen now), materials are delivered to all schools, and teachers receive in-service days and training. He said, "There are gaps in teachers' knowledge." The Minister argued the country needs better principals because many are poor managers. Ambassador Gips mentioned a new partnership between the University of Johannesburg and Harvard University that will focus on training for principals. Chabane welcomed the partnership and lamented the government's decision in the 1990s to eliminate teachers' colleges and merge them with universities. He said, "Universities can't cope with the number of students." On health, Chabane said the goals for performance include increasing life expectancy figures and addressing mother-to-child health issues -- particularly on HIV/AIDS.

17. (U) Chabane told the Ambassador that "Zuma wants me to lead a team on corruption." He is particularly looking to combat corruption through the Public Services ministry and the Treasury. He said he finds that even with good legislation, too many individuals are working the system to

enrich themselves and allegations of corruption are difficult to prove because often officials are accused merely for political reasons. He stated, "We should work with you to identify areas where we can prevent it." Chabane welcomed the idea of working with the USG on finding partners to tackle corruption and public governance. (Note: We are following up on this. End Note.) He said, "We need a forum to discuss solutions with countries that combat corruption well."

¶18. (U) The Minister said the government is worried about forensic training for police officers. Too often cases go unsolved or fail in the judicial system because of poor evidence collection and tracking. Chabane was open to public-private training to improve forensic training. Ambassador Gips noted South Africa might benefit from greater cooperation with USG law enforcement officers. The Deputy Chief of Mission mentioned how USG police training in South Africa has gone well so far and how South African law enforcement officials have successfully taken training at the International Law Enforcement Agency in Botswana. The Minister said he would follow through on forensics training. (Note: We are following up on this. Embassy INL-funded Senior Law Enforcement Advisor currently is working with QSenior Law Enforcement Advisor currently is working with South African Police Service Training Commissioner Kruser on a forensics gap analysis to determine future training needs. End Note.)

¶19. (U) Chabane said he is in charge of youth issues for the government and recently established a youth development agency. He said the government is looking for help on youth issues so the administration can tackle job growth among young people. The Minister was open to discussing youth issues in the future with Ambassador Gips, who discussed his background in helping to establish AmeriCorps, and promised to reach out to the Embassy after discussing with colleagues ways of following up. (Note: We have been in subsequent contact with the Minister's office on this issue and we are following up on ways forward. The Minister's Director of Communications said he would email us more information this week. End Note.) Chabane did not seek assistance on rural development issues, but did say that it remains a huge problem for the government because there is no infrastructure in many rural areas and cities are becoming overcrowded. He said, "Rural development here is terrible."

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Comment

¶10. (C) There are few jobs in South Africa tougher than being the Minister of Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency, overseeing the entire government, with a small staff and limited budget. Given the scope of South Africa's problems, it is not surprising that Chabane is struggling with this task. However, he recognizes the daunting responsibilities that come with his position and seems prepared to conceptualize ways of tackling the country's most staggering challenges with both government insiders and outsiders. Ambassador Gips made it clear that the USG stands ready to help the Minister address areas of mutual concern such as education, health, corruption, police training, and youth programs. In his own quiet way, Chabane made it clear he would be ready for such cooperation and would seek to follow up on assistance in the future. End Comment.
GIPS